

PATENT

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES**

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Application for Patent

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Application No. 09/846,115

FOR:

**ALTERING NETWORK TRANSMITTED CONTENT DATA BASED
UPON USER SPECIFIED CHARACTERISTICS**

APPEAL BRIEF

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I. REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest is Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc., the assignee of the present application.

II. RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

The Applicants are not aware of any related appeals or interferences.

III. STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-19, 21-23, and 25-37 are pending in the subject application. Claim 20 and claim 24 have been canceled. Claims 1-19, 21-23, and 25-37 have been rejected and are on appeal.

IV. STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

Applicants submitted an amendment on February 21, 2008, in response to a non-Final Office Action mailed on November 21, 2007. This amendment was the last entered amendment.

V. SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

The subject invention is directed towards applying output characteristics to content data sent across a communications network.

As recited in **independent claim 1**, a method to modify content data (page 7, lines 14-21) transmitted from a first computer 605 to a second computer 607 over a bi-directional communications network 608. The method includes an operation that specifies content data output characteristics (page 11, lines 2-8) to be associated with the content data upon output by the second computer 607. The method also includes an operation that transmits the content data from the first computer 605 to the second computer 607 over the

bi-directional communications network 608. Also included in the method is an operation that alters the content data (page 12, lines 10-12) that is to be output by the second computer 607 in accordance with the content data output characteristics (page 11, lines 2-8) specified through the first computer 605. The output characteristics identifying an expression to be applied to the content data (page 13, lines 6-11), and the altering includes converting an audio component of the content data to text data, the text data being processed into converted text data, and the converted text data being synthesized into audio data that includes the applied expression (Figure 4) that does not perform language translation (page 11, lines 5-7; *see also section VII.B.1 hereinbelow which describes how the claimed subject matter satisfies the written description requirement; further, “the conversion process 204 may include a translator” [emphasis added] clearly indicates the optional inclusion of the translator, and because it is optional, a translator may also not be included*).

Additionally, a method to modify content data transmitted from a first computer 605 to a second computer 607 over a bi-directional communications network 608 is recited in **independent claim 10**. The method includes an operation that specifies content data output characteristics (page 12, lines 10-12) to be associated with the content data upon output by the second computer 607. The content data output characteristics defined by an applied expression (page 13, lines 6-11) that does not performing language translation but includes at least one of character gender, character condition, and character environment (page 11, lines 5-7). In another operation, the method transmits the content data from the first computer 605 to the second computer 607 over the bi-directional communications network 608. The method also alters the content data that is to be output by the second computer 607 in accordance with the content data output characteristics that are defined by

the applied expression. The altering of content data further includes converting an audio component of the content data to text data, the text data being processed to converted text data, and the converted text data being synthesized to audio data (Figure 4). Wherein the first computer 605 is coupled to a plurality of client computers over an interactive network, and wherein each user of a client computer is associated with a character represented in a program executed on each computer, each character having associated therewith a specific content data output characteristic, the method further including, determining a relative location of each character in an environment defined by the program; and altering the specific output characteristics of the audio output depending upon the relative location of each character associated with each of the users (page 13, lines 6-11).

Further, as recited in **independent claim 14**, a system is disclosed that is configured to modify content data transmitted from a first computer 605 to a second computer 607 over a bi-directional communications network 608. The system includes means for specifying content data output characteristics to be associated with the content data upon output by the second computer 607. The system also includes means for transmitting the content data from the first computer 605 to the second computer 607 over the bi-directional communications network 608. Additionally, the system has means for altering the content data that is to be output by the second computer 607 in accordance with the content data output characteristics (page 12, lines 10-12) specified through the first computer 605, the output characteristics identifying an expression to be applied to the content data, the applying of the expression not performing language translation (page 11, lines 5-7), and the means for altering content data includes a voice recognition means for converting an audio component of the content data into text data (page 12, lines 16-18) a

text conversion means for processing the text data to converted text data, and a voice synthesis means to synthesize the converted text data to audio data that includes the applied expression (page 12, lines 20-23).

Further still, as recited in **independent claim 22** a server computer 607 coupled to one or more client computers 605 over a bi-directional communications network 608 is disclosed. The server 607 computer includes a circuit to transmit content data to a computer of the one or more client computers over the bi-directional communications network. Also included is a circuit to specify content data output characteristics to be associated with the content data upon output by the computer. A circuit is also included to alter the content data that is to be output by the computer in accordance with the content data output characteristics (page 12, lines 10-12), the content data output characteristics identifying an expression (page 13, lines 1-11) to be applied to the content data and applying the expression does not include performing language translation, the circuit to alter the content data includes circuitry to convert an audio component of the content data to text data, circuitry to process the text data to converted text data, and circuitry to synthesize the converted text data to audio data. (page 12, lines 10-23)

Additionally, as recited in **independent claim 30**, a server computer 607 coupled to one or more client computers 605 over a bi-directional communications network 608 includes means for transmitting content data to a computer of the one or more client computers over the bi-directional communications network. The server also includes means for specifying content data output characteristics (page 12, lines 10-12) to be associated with the content data upon output by the computer. Also included are means for altering the content data that is to be output by the computer in accordance with the content data output characteristics, the content data output characteristics identifying an expression

to be applied to the content data (page 13, lines 1-11), and applying the expression does not include performing language translation, the means for altering the content data includes means for altering an audio component of the content data to text data, means for processing the text data to converted text data, and means for synthesizing the converted text data to audio data for output in a client computer (page 12, lines 10-23).

Still further, as recited in **independent claim 32**, an interactive network system that includes a first computer 605 and a second computer 607. The second computer 607 receiving content data from the first computer 605, wherein the content data is altered in accordance with content data output characteristics specified by the first computer 605. The interactive network system further comprising, a voice recognition component, the voice recognition component converts an audio component of the content data to text data (page 11, lines 4-8). A text conversion component, the text conversion component processes the text data to converted text data, and a voice synthesis component, the voice synthesis component synthesizes the converted text data to audio data for output in the second computer. Wherein audio data to be output at the second computer includes the application of an expression alteration that does not include performing language translation (page 12, lines 10-23).

Additionally, as recited in **independent claim 37** a gaming system includes a first gaming computer coupled over a gaming server to a second gaming computer, a respective game character being controlled through each of the first gaming computer and the second gaming computer (Figure 1). Wherein the first gaming computer enables the definition of content data output characteristics for its respective game character. Wherein the second gaming computer enables the definition of content data output characteristics for its respective game character, the content data output characteristics identifying an expression

to be applied to the content data and applying the expression does not include performing language translation, the content data output characteristics further including instructions for converting audio data to text data, instructions for processing the text data to converted text data, and instructions for synthesizing the converted text data to audio data. Whereby the audio data to be output at the second gaming computer being associated with its respective game character, and the second gaming computer is used in altering audio data to be output at the first gaming computer, the audio data to be output at the first gaming computer being associated with its respective game character (page 12, lines 10-23).

It should be appreciated that the above description represents only a summary of the present invention. A more in-depth discussion of the present invention is provided in the Detailed Description section of the application.

VI. GROUND OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

The following groups are separately argued, and a decision is separately requested for each group.

- A. Claims 1-19, 21-23, and 25-37 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph.**
- B. Claims 1-19, 21-23, and 25-37 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph.**
- C. Independent claims 1, 10, 14, 22, 30, 32 and 37 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,385,586 by Dietz (hereinafter, Dietz) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,901,360 by Dymetman et al. (hereinafter Dymetman).**
- D. Dependent claims 5 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dietz and Dymetman.**
- E. Dependent claims 6, 17 and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dietz and Dymetman.**
- F. Dependent claims 7 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dietz and Dymetman.**

- G. Dependent claims 8 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dietz and Dymetman.**
- H. Dependent claim 27, 28, and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dietz and Dymetman.**
- I. Dependent claim 34 and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dietz and Dymetman.**

VII. ARGUMENT

- A. Rejection of claim 1-19, 21-23 and 25-37 under 35 U.S.C. §112 second paragraph**

1. The claimed subject matter is not indefinite:

The as-filed specification provides support for how the claimed subject matter would work without performing language translation. For example, in the written description of Figure 3, it states that, "The voice data is first input through an analog-to-digital (A/D) converter for conversion into digital form" (page 11, lines 13-16). It is further elaborated that, "The voice can be changed based on various factors such as virtual character talk parameters, or user provided preferences." (page 11, line 23 thru page 12, line 2). Additionally, the description of Figure 3 states that, "The voice conversion process comprises processes that alter or modify the digitized voice data output from A/D converter in the server computer into converted voice data to be output from the D/A converter on the client computer." (page 12, lines 10-12)

Figure 4 and the associated written description further elaborate the conversion process and states, "The digitized audio data is converted into text data through a voice recognition process that converts digitized audio to equivalent digital text data. The text data is then processed by a text conversion process to produce converted text data. This converted text data is then processed through a voice synthesis process to produce audio

data." (page 12, lines 16-21). The specification further describes the text conversion process and states that, "The text conversion process includes several sub-processes that alter the original voice data to change the voice as it is played back on the client computer. Such changes can include modifications of the original voice tone, accent, intonation, and so on. (page 12, lines 1-3).

The specification further states that, "Primarily, the text conversion process alters the expression of the original voice data. The expression shows a character's personality or attribute (e.g., male or female or child speaker), character's circumstances or environment (e.g., in a tunnel, cave, etc.), the character's condition (e.g., excited, sad, injured, etc.), the text conversion process can also include special effects that alter the input voice data such as Doppler effect, echo, and so on." (page 12, lines 6-11).

B. Rejection of claims 1-19, 21-23, and 25-37 under 35 U.S.C. §112 first paragraph

1. The claimed subject matter satisfies the written description requirement.

The Examiner contends that, "...applicant failed to describe/mention that 'the applied expression does not perform language translation'". However, MPEP 2173.05(i) states, "If alternative elements are positively recited in the specification, they may be explicitly excluded in the claims." See *In re Johnson*, 558 F.2d 1008, 1019, 194 USPQ 187, 196 (CCPA 1977). See also *Ex parte Grasselli*, 231 USPQ 393 (Bd. App. 1983), *aff'd mem.*, 738 F.2d 453 (Fed. Cir. 1984). Language translation is affirmatively recited in the specification on page 11, lines 4-5 where it states, "For speech output, the conversion process can control characteristics such as language, dialect, expression and so on." (page 11, lines 4-5). Additionally, the as-field specification states, "The text conversion process

can also include processes that alter the substance of the input data, such as language translation (e.g., English-French) or dialect translation." (page 13, lines 4-5).

The as-filed specification explicitly recites language translation and therefore, in accordance with MPEP 2173.05(i), language translation is appropriately excluded in the claims. Furthermore, MPEP 2173.05(i) additionally states, "Note that lack of literal basis in the specification for a negative limitation may not be sufficient to establish *prima facie* case for lack of descriptive support. *Ex parte Parks*, 30 USPQ2d 1234, 1236 (Bd. App. & Inter. 1993).

Further, Appellant asserts that "the conversion process 204 may include a translator" (page 11, lines 5-6, emphasis added) clearly indicates the **optional** inclusion of the translator. Because it is optional, a translator may also not be included. Therefore, all the subject matter in the aforementioned claims is described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the art that the inventor, at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.

C. Rejection of independent claims 1, 10, 14, 22, 30, 32, and 37 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dietz and Dymetman.

1. The combination of Dietz and Dymetman is inappropriate as it contravenes MPEP 2141.02 VI.

MPEP 2141.02 VI states, "A prior art reference must be considered in its entirety, i.e., as a whole, including portions that would lead away from the claimed invention." *W.L. Gore & Associates, Inc. v. Garlock, Inc.*, 721 F.2d 1540, 220 USPQ 303 (Fed. Cir. 1983), cert. denied, 469 U.S. 851 (1984).

After removal of the 35 U.S.C. §112 rejections, the claims explicitly exclude language translation. On the other hand, Dietz, when considered as a whole as proscribed by MPEP 2141.02 VI, repeatedly and extensively is concerned with language translation.

For example, the title of Dietz includes the phrase, "...to enable language translation devices". Furthermore, Figure 2 and Figure 3 and the corresponding description of Dietz repeatedly and explicitly refer to "language translation". In another example of Dietz being used for language translation Dietz includes a "geographic location" that is used to determine language translation parameters based on the location of a user (column 4, lines 31-64), (column 7, lines 11-19).

Thus while the disclosure of Dietz is explicitly dealing with language translation, the Examiner has asserted that, "Performing language translation is design choice or obvious to select/not select based on system/user demand." It seems incongruous to perform any aspect of Dietz without performing language translation. As previously discussed, when considered as a whole as proscribed by MPEP 4141.02 VI, Dietz deals with language translation. With the claimed subject matter explicitly excluding language translation, there would be no motivation for one skilled in the art to look toward the teachings of Dietz as it would lead away from claimed subject matter.

2. ***The combination of Dietz and Dymetman is inappropriate as it contravenes MPEP 2143.01 V.***

MPEP 2143.01 V that states, "If proposed modification would render the prior art invention being modified unsatisfactory for its intended purpose, then there is no suggestion or motivation to make the proposed modification." In re Gordon, 733 F.2d 900, 221 USPQ 1125 (Fed. Cir. 1984).

As illustrated in Figure 2 and described in the specification of Dietz, the I/O device 201 captures the voice to be translated, communicates with the server providing the translation and receives the translated language data from the server (column 5, lines 40-55). Thus, Dietz, even in light of Dymetman, is principally concerned with outputting language translation from the *first computer, I/O device 210*. Implementation of the

Examiner's proposed combination of Dietz and Dymetman would produce audible sound output from the *second computer*. Such an implementation would render Dietz unsatisfactory for its intended purpose as the language translation would not be sent to the first computer.

While the Examiner wishes to produce audible sound from Dietz's *second computer*, Dietz explicitly states that audible sound data is to be sent to the *I/O device, or first computer*. To produce audible sound from the second computer of Dietz would result in the translation being audibly heard near the Dietz server. Dietz fails to disclose such an embodiment and doing so would be result in something entirely different than providing a translation at the first computer as actually taught by Dietz. The Examiner's proposed combination of Dietz and Dymetman is in contravention of MPEP 2143.01 V. Accordingly there is neither suggestion nor motivation to make the proposed modification. Without suggestion or motivation to combine Dietz and Dymetman, there would be no reason for a one skilled in the art to look toward the combination of Dietz and Dymetman.

3. **The combination of Dietz and Dymetman is inappropriate as it contravenes MPEP 2143.01 VI.**

The proposed combination of Dietz and Dymetman contravene MPEP 2143.01 VI which states, "If the proposed modification or combination of the prior art would change the principle of operation of the prior art invention being modified, then the teachings of the references are not sufficient to render the claims prima facie obvious."

As recited in Dietz, "Outputting an audio form requires a text-to-voice application 211 which converts the desired language text into an audio output *for sending to I/O device 210*." (Column 6, Lines 4-7). A principle of operation of Dietz, even in light of Dymetman, is outputting language translation from the *first computer, I/O device 210*. Therefore, the Examiner's proposed combination of Dietz and Dymetman to produce

audible sound output from the *second computer*, would change the principle of operation of Dietz.

Where the Examiner wishes to produce audible sound from Dietz's *second computer*, Dietz explicitly states that audible sound data is to be sent to the *I/O device, or first computer*. Dietz fails to disclose outputting audible sound data from the second computer, or server, as Dietz is explicitly teaches that the translated audio is to be sent back to the first computer. Thus, the proposed combination of Dietz and Dymetman results in something entirely different than the claimed subject matter. Furthermore, the proposed combination of Dietz and Dymetman is improper because it would change the principle of operation of the Dietz in violation of MPEP 2143.01 VI. Therefore, the combination of Dietz and Dymetman is insufficient to render the claimed subject matter prima facie obvious. Because Dietz and Dymetman fail to render the claimed subject matter prima facie obvious for at least the reasons discussed above, independent claims 1, 10, 14, 22, 30, 32, and 37, along with their respective dependent claims are allowable.

D. Rejection of dependent claims 5 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dietz and Dymetman.

1. The combination of Dietz and Dymetman fails to teach or suggest the claimed subject matter.

Dependent claims 5 and 16 include all the elements of the claims from which they depend and should be allowable for at least the reasons discussed above regarding their respective independent claims. Additionally, dependent claims 5 and 16 further recite that the content data is transmitted for output through speakers coupled to the second computer. However, the cited portions of the proposed combination of Dietz and Dymetman do not mention speakers being coupled to the second computer. The Examiner

cites Figure 1 of Dietz along and the corresponding text found between column 3, line 44 and column 4 line 64.

The cited portions of Dietz discuss display adapters and memory controllers (column 4, lines 10-11). Similarly, input/output devices such as a display monitor, keyboard and a graphical pointing device are specifically listed (column 3, lines 50-52). The cited portion of Dietz fails to mention that the content data is transmitted for output through speakers coupled to the server. There would be no motivation to combine Dietz and Dymetman because the cited portions of Dietz fail to teach or suggest the features of the dependent claims 5 and 16.

E. Rejection of dependent claims 6, 17, and 26 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dietz and Dymetman.

1. The combination of Dietz and Dymetman fails to teach or suggest the claimed subject matter.

Dependent claims 6, 17 and 26 include all the elements of the claims from which they depend and should be allowable for at least the reasons discussed above regarding their respective independent claims. Furthermore, dependent claims 6, 17, and 26 additionally recite that the content data output characteristics include at least one of character gender, character condition, and character environment. The Examiner has cited column 4, lines 30-64 of Dietz as teaching the claimed subject matter. However, the cited portions of Dietz explicitly enable language translation devices. The cited portions of Dietz fail to address or even mention character gender, character condition and character environment. Because the cited portions of Dietz fail to teach or suggest the claimed subject matter, there would be no motivation to combine Dietz and Dymetman in order to result in the claimed subject matter of dependent claims 6, 17 and 26.

F. Rejection of dependent claims 7 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dietz and Dymetman.

1. The combination of Dietz and Dymetman fails to teach or suggest the claimed subject matter.

Dependent claims 7 and 19 include all the elements of the claims from which they depend and should be allowable for at least the reasons discussed above regarding their respective independent claims. However, dependent claims 7 and 19 additionally recite that the content data output characteristics are defined by input received by the first computer through a user interface. The Examiner cited Figure 1 of Dietz, and the corresponding text found in column 3, line 44 to column 4 line 30 as teaching the claimed subject matter.

The cited portions of Dietz explicitly discuss the server, which the Examiner had previously analogized as the second computer. As such, the cited portion of the Dietz fails to describe any aspect of the first computer and is similarly silent regarding defining content data through a user interface. Because the cited portions of Dietz fails to address the additional elements of the dependent claims 7 and 19 the combination of Dietz and Dymetman would neither teach nor suggest the claimed subject matter.

G. Rejection of dependent claims 8 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dietz and Dymetman.

1. The combination of Dietz and Dymetman fails to teach or suggest the claimed subject matter.

Dependent claims 8 and 18 include all the elements of the claims from which they depend and should be allowable for at least the reasons discussed above regarding their respective independent claims. Additionally, dependent claims 8 and 18 further recite that the content data output characteristics are defined by input received by the second computer through a user interface. Once again, the Examiner cited Figure 1 of Dietz, and

the corresponding text found in column 3, line 44 to column 4 line 30 as teaching the claimed subject matter.

The cited portions of Dietz discuss the server, which the Examiner had previously analogized as the second computer. However, the cited portions of Dietz fail to teach or suggest the use of a user interface of the second computer to define content data output characteristics. In fact, Dietz explicitly relies on the first computer to define the target language translation (column 4, lines 34-39), or content data output characteristics. The cited portion of Dietz merely describes the hardware aspects of the Dietz server and fails to describe or contemplate defining the content data output characteristic. Because the cited portions of Dietz fail to teach or suggest the claimed subject matter, there would be no motivation to combine Dietz and Dymetman in order to result in the claimed subject matter of dependent claims 8 and 18.

H. Rejection of dependent claims 27, 28, and 29 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dietz and Dymetman.

1. The combination of Dietz and Dymetman fails to teach or suggest the claimed subject matter.

Dependent claims 27, 28 and 29 include all the elements of the claims from which they depend and should be allowable for at least the reasons discussed above regarding their respective independent claims. Dependent claim 27 recites that the server computer and the one or more client computer include game consoles configured to execute an interactive game. Similarly, dependent claims 28 and 29 further depend on claim 27. The Examiner rejected claim 27 for the same reason set forth to reject claims 1-13 and 31. Claims 1-13 and 31 do not include the phrase "game console", nor do they contain the phrase "interactive game".

However, dependent claim 27 includes language specifying that the server computer and the one or more client computer include game consoles. Thus, the Examiner has failed to show where the combination of Dietz and Dymetman teaches or suggests the use of a game console configured to execute an interactive game. Because the cited portions of Dietz fail to teach or suggest the claimed subject matter, there would be no motivation to combine Dietz and Dymetman in order to result in the claimed subject matter.

I. Rejection of dependent claims 34 and 35 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dietz and Dymetman.

I. The combination of Dietz and Dymetman fails to teach or suggest the claimed subject matter.

Dependent claims 34 and 25 include all the elements of the claims from which they depend and should be allowable for at least the reasons discussed above regarding their respective independent claims. Additionally, dependent claim 34 further recites that the location information for the first and second computers are associated with respective characters to be shown on a display for both the first and second computer. Similarly, dependent claim 35 depends on claim 34. The Examiner rejected claim 34 and 35 for the same reason set forth to reject claims 1-13 and 31. Claims 1-13 and 31 do not include the phrase "respective characters to be shown on a display for both the first and second computer".

As previously discussed, dependent claim 34 specifically states that the location information for the first and second computers are associated with respective characters to be shown on a display for both the first and second computer. Thus, the Examiner has failed to show where the combination of Dietz and Dymetman teaches or suggests that the location information for the first and second computers are associated with respective

characters to be shown on a display for both the first and second computer. There would be no motivation to combine Dietz and Dymetman to result in the claimed subject matter because both Dietz and Dymetman fail to teach or suggest the features of the dependent claims 34 and 35.

VIII. CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing reasons, the Applicants submit that each of the claims 1-19, 21-23 and 25-37 are patentable. Therefore, the Applicants respectfully request that the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences reverse the Examiner's rejections of the claims on appeal.

Respectfully submitted,
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IX. CLAIMS APPENDIX

1. A method of modifying content data transmitted from a first computer to a second computer over a bi-directional communications network, comprising:

specifying content data output characteristics to be associated with the content data upon output by the second computer;

transmitting the content data from the first computer to the second computer over the bi-directional communications network; and

altering the content data that is to be output by the second computer in accordance with the content data output characteristics specified through the first computer, the output characteristics identifying an expression to be applied to the content data, and the altering includes converting an audio component of the content data to text data, the text data being processed into converted text data, and the converted text data being synthesized into audio data that includes the applied expression that does not perform language translation.

2 The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

receiving the content data in the first computer; and

outputting the altered content data from the second computer.

3. The method according to claim 2, wherein the content data output characteristics include location information of the first and second computers, the location information affects the altering of the content data.

4. The method according to claim 2, wherein the received content data comprises voice data input into the first computer.

5. The method according to claim 4, wherein the altered content data being transmitted for output through speakers coupled to the second computer.

6. The method according to claim 5, wherein the content data output characteristics include at least one of character gender, character condition, and character environment.

7. The method according to claim 5, wherein the content data output characteristics are defined by input received by the first computer through a user interface.

8. The method according to claim 5, wherein the content data output characteristics are defined by input received by the second computer through a user interface.

9. The method according to claim 5, wherein the content data output characteristics are stored in a database residing in a memory storage coupled to the second computer.

10. A method of modifying content data transmitted from a first computer to a second computer over a bi-directional communications network, comprising:

specifying content data output characteristics to be associated with the content data upon output by the second computer, the content data output characteristics defined by an applied expression, the applied expression not performing language translation but including at least one of character gender, character condition, and character environment;

transmitting the content data from the first computer to the second computer over the bi-directional communications network;

altering the content data that is to be output by the second computer in accordance with the content data output characteristics that are defined by the applied expression, the altering of content data further includes converting an audio component of the content data to text data, the text data being processed to converted text data, and the converted text data being synthesized to audio data;

wherein the first computer is coupled to a plurality of client computers over an interactive network, and wherein each user of a client computer is associated with a character represented in a program executed on each computer, each character having associated therewith a specific content data output characteristic, the method further including,

determining a relative location of each character in an environment defined by the program; and

altering the specific output characteristics of the audio output depending upon the relative location of each character associated with each of the users.

11. The method of claim 5, wherein the first and second computers are coupled to audio speakers, and wherein the content data output characteristics comprise an audio output ratio for outputting content data from the audio speakers.

12. The method of claim 5, wherein the location information for the first and second computers are respectively obtained from the first and second computers.

13. The method of claim 5, wherein the location information for the first and second computers are respectively determined by the physical location of the first and second computers.

14. A system configured to modify content data transmitted from a first computer to a second computer over a bi-directional communications network, the system comprising:

means for specifying content data output characteristics to be associated with the content data upon output by the second computer;

means for transmitting the content data from the first computer to the second computer over the bi-directional communications network; and

means for altering the content data that is to be output by the second computer in accordance with the content data output characteristics specified through the first computer, the output characteristics identifying an expression to be applied to the content data, the applying of the expression not performing language translation, and the means for altering content data includes a voice recognition means for converting an audio

component of the content data into text data, a text conversion means for processing the text data to converted text data, and a voice synthesis means to synthesize the converted text data to audio data that includes the applied expression.

15. The system of claim 14, further comprising:

means for receiving content data in the first computer;

means for transmitting the altered content data to the second computer over the bi-directional communications network; and

means for outputting the altered content data from the second computer.

16. The system according to claim 15, wherein the received content data comprises voice data input into the first computer, and wherein the audio data of the altered content data being transmitted through audio speakers coupled to the second computer.

17. The system according to claim 16, wherein the content data output characteristics include at least one of character gender, character condition, and character environment.

18. The system according to claim 17, further comprising graphical input means for receiving content data output characteristics input through the second computer.

19. The system according to claim 17, further comprising graphical input means for receiving content data output characteristics input through the first computer.

20. (Cancelled)

21. The system of claim 19, wherein the content data output characteristics comprise an audio output ratio for outputting altered content data from the audio speakers coupled to the second computer.

22. A server computer coupled to one or more client computers over a bi-directional communications network, comprising:

a circuit to transmit content data to a computer of the one or more client computers over the bi-directional communications network;

a circuit to specify content data output characteristics to be associated with the content data upon output by the computer; and

a circuit to alter the content data that is to be output by the computer in accordance with the content data output characteristics, the content data output characteristics identifying an expression to be applied to the content data and applying the expression does not include performing language translation, the circuit to alter the content data includes circuitry to convert an audio component of the content data to text data, circuitry to process the text data to converted text data, and circuitry to synthesize the converted text data to audio data.

23. The server computer of claim 22, further comprising:

a circuit to receive the content data; and

a circuit to transmit the altered content data to the computer over the bi-directional communications network.

24. (Cancelled)

25. The server computer of claim 23, wherein the received content data comprises voice data input into a first computer.

26. The server computer according to claim 25, wherein the content data output characteristics include parameters that alter the content data associated with audio output from the computer, the content data output characteristics comprising at least one of character gender, character condition, and character environment.

27. The server computer according to claim 23, wherein the bi-directional communications network comprises an interactive network, and wherein the server computer and the one or more client computers include game consoles configured to execute an interactive game.

28. The server computer according to claim 27, wherein the content data output characteristics are associated with respective characters defined by the game, each one of

the respective characters is associated with a particular client computer of the one or more client computers.

29. The server computer according to claim 28, comprising:

a circuit to determine a relative location of each one of the respective characters defined by the game; and

a circuit to alter the content data output characteristics of the audio output depending upon the location of each one of the respective characters associated with each client computer of the one or more client computers.

30. A server computer coupled to one or more client computers over a bi-directional communications network, comprising:

means for transmitting content data to a computer of the one or more client computers over the bi-directional communications network;

means for specifying content data output characteristics to be associated with the content data upon output by the computer; and

means for altering the content data that is to be output by the computer in accordance with the content data output characteristics, the content data output characteristics identifying an expression to be applied to the content data, and applying the expression does not include performing language translation, the means for altering the content data includes means for altering an audio component of the content data to text data, means for processing the text data to converted text data, and means for synthesizing the converted text data to audio data for output in a client computer.

31. The method of claim 10, wherein each of the client computers includes a left and right speaker pair, and wherein the content data output characteristics comprise a relative audio output ratio for outputting altered content data from the left and right speakers.

32. An interactive network system, comprising;

a first computer;

a second computer, the second computer receiving content data from the first computer, wherein the content data is altered in accordance with content data output characteristics specified by the first computer, the interactive network system further comprising,

a voice recognition component, the voice recognition component converts an audio component of the content data to text data;

a text conversion component, the text conversion component processes the text data to converted text data, and

a voice synthesis component, the voice synthesis component synthesizes the converted text data to audio data for output in the second computer;

wherein audio data to be output at the second computer includes the application of an expression alteration that does not include performing language translation.

33. An interactive network system as recited in claim 32, wherein the content data received at the second computer is altered based on content data output characteristics specified by the first computer the content data output characteristics include location information of the first and second computers, the location information at least partially

affecting the altering of the content data when received at the second computer.

34. An interactive network system as recited in claim 33, wherein the location information of the first and second computers are associated with respective characters to be shown on a display of both of the first and second computers.

35. An interactive network system as recited in claim 34, wherein the characters are parts of an interactive networked game in which participation in the game is through the first and second computers.

36. An interactive network system as recited in claim 32, wherein the first and second computers are networked together and a server assists in the communication and data handling between the first and second computers.

37. A gaming system, comprising:
a first gaming computer coupled over a gaming server to a second gaming computer, a respective game character being controlled through each of the first gaming computer and the second gaming computer,

wherein the first gaming computer enables the definition of content data output characteristics for its respective game character;

wherein the second gaming computer enables the definition of content data output characteristics for its respective game character, the content data output characteristics identifying an expression to be applied to the content data and applying the expression does not include performing language translation, the content data output characteristics further including instructions for converting audio data to text data, instructions for

processing the text data to converted text data, and instructions for synthesizing the converted text data to audio data;

whereby the audio data to be output at the second gaming computer being associated with its respective game character, and the second gaming computer is used in altering audio data to be output at the first gaming computer, the audio data to be output at the first gaming computer being associated with its respective game character.

X. EVIDENCE APPENDIX

There is currently no evidence entered and relied upon in this Appeal.

XI. RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX

There are currently no decisions rendered by a court or the Board in any proceeding identified in the Related Appeals and Interferences section.